

TNGO Initiative, annual report, 2010-11

The annual report for the TNGO Initiative is divided into four parts: mission of the TNGO Initiative (1), overview of 2010-11 activities (2), and plans for 2011-12 (3).

I. The Transnational NGO Initiative

The globalization of markets and ideas has created cross-national challenges and opportunities unimaginable a few decades ago. An increasingly integrated global economy, cross-border violence, transboundary environmental crises, and other challenges strain the capacity of the traditional inter-governmental system that has dominated international politics for over two centuries. Transnational non-governmental organizations (TNGOs) and their networks have emerged as key players in shaping answers to those global challenges. The TNGO Initiative is co-directed by Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken and Hans Peter Schmitz. The TNGO Initiative's research agenda grew out of a National Science Foundation Grant No. SES-0527679 (Transnational NGOs as Agents of Change: Toward Understanding Their Governance, Leadership, and Effectiveness), 2005-2008, an interview study of 152 US-based TNGO leaders focusing on questions of governance, effectiveness, accountability, networking/collaboration, and leadership.

The Transnational NGO Initiative advances the understanding of TNGOs as core players in global affairs through research, education, and practitioner engagement. On the research side, the primary focus is on the original questions pursued as part of the NSF grant (the governance, leadership and effectiveness of transnational NGOs) as well as on rights-based approaches in development and organizational change requirements related to improved outcome accountability and learning needs of TNGOs. With regard to education, we offer a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Civil Society Organizations, host the TNGO (Graduate) Student Group, and facilitate internships as well as 'capstone' projects and related student research practicum opportunities. The part on practitioner engagement encompasses the Moynihan Fellowship program and the newly established annual Transnational NGO Leadership Institute. Our particular strength lies in creating positive feedback across the three parts and in drawing on the interdisciplinary strengths of the Maxwell School. The fall 2010 issue of *Maxwell Perspective* highlights some of the key contributions of the TNGO Initiative within the Maxwell School (p. 12-19).

II. Activities, 2010-11

The activities of the TNGO Initiative encompass three closely related areas: research, education, and practitioner engagement.

Research. The main accomplishments include the successful placement of graduate team members in tenure track positions (1), the publication of several peer-reviewed articles (2), the use of the dataset by scholars across the country (3), the expansion of applied research in collaboration with TNGOs (4), a strong presence at academic conferences and the expansion of the INGO Research Group (5), the submission of a grant proposal to the National Science Foundation (6), and a collaboration with the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and

International Affairs (IFI) at American University Beirut about extending our original TNGO study to the Middle East region (7).

Placement. Among the core members of the TNGO team, Jesse Lecy joined the Public Administration department at Georgia State University in August 2010 and George Mitchell will start in the fall of 2011 as a tenure track faculty in Political Science at City College of New York. A third graduate student, Haley Swedlund, who carried out and published research on questions closely related to the NSF study received two tenure track offers this year and will start teaching in August 2011 at the School of Management, Radboud University, Nijmegen/the Netherlands.

Publications. Progress at the publication front is steady and has markedly increased the visibility of the TNGO Initiative in the scholarly and practitioner communities.

Accepted for publication:

- Baur, Dorothea, and Hans Peter Schmitz 2012: Corporations and NGOs: When Accountability leads to Co-optation, *Journal of Business Ethics*, forthcoming.
- Bruno-van Vijfeijken, Tosca and Hans Peter Schmitz 2011: A Gap between Ambition and Effectiveness, *Journal of Civil Society*, forthcoming (fall).
- Schmitz, Hans Peter 2011: Transnational NGOs and Human Rights in a post-9/11 World, in *Human Rights in the 21st Century. Continuity and Change since 9/11*, ed. by Michael Goodhart and Anja Mihr, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 203-221.
- Lecy, Jesse D., George E. Mitchell, and Hans Peter Schmitz 2010: Advocacy organizations, networks, and the firm analogy, in *Advocacy Organizations and Collective Action*, ed. by Aseem Prakash and Mary Kay Gugerty, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 229-251.
- Rodio, Emily B. and Hans Peter Schmitz 2010: Beyond Norms and Interests: Understanding Transnational Human Rights Activism, *The International Journal of Human Rights* 14 (3), 442-459.

Currently under review:

- Schmitz, Hans Peter, Paloma Raggo, and Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken: New standards, old habits: Transnational NGO leaders' perspectives on the what for, to whom, and how of being accountable, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*.
- Mitchell, George E.: The Construct of Organizational Effectiveness, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*.
- Mitchell, George E.: Ideologies of Activism, *International Political Sociology*.
- Lecy, Jesse, Ines Mergel, and Hans Peter Schmitz: Moving beyond the boundaries of network research in public administration, *Public Administration Review*.
- Lecy, Jesse, Haley Swedlund, and Hans Peter Schmitz: Non-Governmental and Not-for-Profit Organizational Effectiveness: A Structured Literature Review, *Voluntas. International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*.

The TNGO Initiative was invited to contribute to a special issue of the *Journal of Civil Society* focused on the global crisis of transnational activism. Other contributors include Ann Florini (Singapore & Brookings), Jude Howell (LSE), Margaret Keck (Johns Hopkins), Jan Aart Scholte (Warwick), and Mark Juergensmeyer (UC-Santa Barbara).

Dataset use. The centerpiece of the TNGO Initiative is the TNGO Interview Project, an extensive interview study of transnational NGO leaders. While the transcribed interviews are not available to other researchers (due to confidentiality agreements), we have made available the quantitative dataset (in Stata, SPSS and Excel formats) as well as various Stata scripts that can be run to facilitate analysis and supporting documentation. The interview protocol and the codebook are also both available online. So far, about ten researchers have requested the data and are actively working with it.

Applied research. We strive to create productive feedback between practitioner and research worlds. The most advanced follow-up to our interview study has been an ongoing relationship with Plan International, a development NGO focused on children. Initially, we worked with Plan Guatemala on an evaluation of their implementation of rights-based approaches in program activities. The 80-page report was published in early 2010. As a follow-up, in early 2011 we entered a contract with Plan USA (for a total of \$22,000) to provide a desk review focused on the effectiveness of Child-Centered Community Development (CCCD), a strategy adopted in 2003. During 2010/11, we have opened similar conversations about offering our services to transnational NGOs with Oxfam International and CARE USA. Apart from writing reports for clients, we use the results for academic publications. This applied research also serves as a mentoring opportunity for a former Maxwell student, Uwe Gneiting, who is currently a PhD student at the Free University of Berlin.

George Mitchell was commissioned to write a report titled *Reframing the Discussion about Nonprofit Effectiveness* for the DMA Nonprofit Federation in Washington DC. He presented a draft paper at the annual DMA Nonprofit Federation conference in New York, NY on August 25, 2010. The final report is available on the DMA website (<http://www.nonprofitfederation.org/ethics-policy/ethics>).

Academic presentations and INGO Research Group. We regularly attend academic conferences and practitioner meetings to promote the TNGO Initiative. In the past year, members of the TNGO team have presented at the annual meetings of the Association for Research on Non-Profit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), the International Studies Association (ISA), and the annual meetings of Interaction, the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR), and CIVICUS. At the ARNOVA conference in Alexandria, VA (Nov. 17-20, 2010), the following papers were presented: Paloma Raggo: "Accountability 2.0: The Use of Social Media Tools in U.S.-based Transnational NGOs"; Hans Peter Schmitz/George E. Mitchell/Paloma Raggo: "Challenges Facing Leaders of Transnational NGOs: Introducing New Data from a Cross-Sectoral Study"; Christiane Pagé: "From Change Agents to Method Actors: The Effect of Transnational NGO Leadership Style on NGO-to-Government Relationships"; and David Gregory Berlan/Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken: "Reigning Beyond the Grave: The Case of a Time-Bound NGO."

During the past academic year, we also initiated the creation of an INGO Research Group, bringing together scholars from different disciplines sharing an interest in studying international NGOs. We organized two meetings, one at ARNOVA in November 2010 (attended by about 25) and another one at ISA in March 2011 (attended by about 45). A Ning virtual network (<http://ingoscholars.ning.com/>) and a listserv were created (ingo-research-group@googlegroups.com). We are currently applying for a \$25,000 grant to organize a so-called 'venture workshop' for the research group at the upcoming ISA meetings.

In the fall of 2010, Hans Peter Schmitz was appointed by the incoming president of the American Political Science Association (APSA), Carole Pateman, to her task force on *Democracy, Economic Security, and Social Justice in a Volatile World*. APSA task forces are charged with "(1) putting the best of political science research and knowledge at the service of critical issues that have major public policy implications and (2) sharing with broader society what political scientists know about important trends and issues in areas of public concern."

Grant proposals/fundraising. In collaboration with Professor John Burdick, Anthropology, we prepared and submitted a grant proposal to the National Science Foundation which aims at leveraging our experience in Guatemala as well as with rights-based approaches. The proposal is built around a collaborative relationship between the Maxwell School, transnational NGOs (including Plan, Oxfam, Save the Children) operating in Guatemala, and Landivar University, a premier university based in Guatemala City. During the past year, we also pursued other grant opportunities, including from the Mott Foundation, and received support for the Leadership Institute (LI, see below) in the form of scholarships from the Ford Foundation.

International collaboration. In August 2010, team members Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken and George Mitchell were invited to attend a workshop at the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at American University Beirut. Based on our experience with large-N interview studies, we provided advice on replicating a similar methodological approach in the context of studying civil society organizations in the Middle East, primarily in the environmental sector. The interview protocol and code book of the TNGO study served as a basis to develop a preliminary research design and explore how to expand a possible collaboration as well as fundraise for this joint project.

Education. The TNGO Initiative provides an array of courses and other learning opportunities to the student body at the Maxwell School and Syracuse University.

Graduate level. Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken teaches a graduate course titled *Global Governance and Civil Society* annually. One of the regular course requirements is a research practicum focusing on data needs of TNGOs. In the past year, the seminar worked with ActionAid International. In addition, Tosca acts as faculty advisor for Public Administration workshops (this year with CARE USA as a client). She also acts as faculty advisor for Independent Studies projects by individual students, and regularly offers internship and career advice to students interested in the TNGO sector.

The TNGO team administers the Certificate of Advanced Study on Civil Society Organizations which draws 8-10 students annually.

We host the TNGO Student Group, which offers student-run workshops and talks. This year, the Student Group hosted, among others, Tawanda Mutasah, Director of International Operations/Open Society Foundations, who engaged in a debate with Humphrey Fellows about tensions in the relationship between Northern and Southern NGOs.

Finally, the TNGO team hosts a series of brief conversational web interviews with visiting scholars and practitioners to educate students and faculty about issues in the world of civil

society research and practice. This has proven to be a useful teaching tool for many Maxwell courses. The interview series can be found at:
http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/tngo/interview_series/Interview_Series/

Undergraduate level. During the past two years, TNGO team members have offered advanced undergraduate courses which drew heavily on the results of the TNGO Interview Study. In 2010, Hans Peter Schmitz taught the distinction course *Organizing Global Activism* and in the spring semester of 2011, George Mitchell taught *TNGOs in World Affairs*, a course that offered students opportunities to contribute to the Wikimedia Foundation's Public Policy Initiative.

Practitioner engagement. The TNGO Initiative launched a major new leadership preparation program targeted at NGO practitioners. The inaugural session of the Transnational NGO Leadership Institute (LI) will be held September 15-19, 2011 and is open to second tier NGO staff members who wish to prepare for top leadership positions. This one week executive leadership program responds to a need for greater attention to leadership transition and succession issues in the international nonprofit sector. Our regular interactions with practitioners have shown that leaders working at the second tier are much less networked than top leaders; they are surprisingly rarely considered for top positions, and are not well prepared to take the 'leadership leap' to the top level. The Institute addresses this gap under the guidance of a Steering Group of top NGO leaders. In the future, the TNGO team hopes to add additional 'modules' for targeted audiences based on expressed demand. Examples under development focus on disability NGOs as well as managing significant organizational change aimed at strengthening outcome accountability and learning. For more information:
<https://www.maxwell.syr.edu/leadershipinstitute/>.

In October, we hosted Ramesh Singh, former CEO of ActionAid International, a major development NGO, and former Moynihan NGO Fellow. During his weeklong visit as part of his sabbatical year at Harvard University, Ramesh assisted us in guiding the Transnational NGO Leadership Institute and offered feedback on our research agenda and interview study data.

This past March, we hosted a second Moynihan NGO fellow: Ignacio Saiz, Director of the Center on Economic and Social Rights (CESR), based in Madrid, Spain. A team of seven students supported his research centered around his organization's need to combine its mission of being a global think tank with that of leading a global network of national economic and social right activists. This fellowship also allowed us to learn more about the discourse around social, economic and cultural rights as a relatively recent addition to the human rights agenda.

As part of our efforts to develop more collaborative and applied research with TNGOs, we held extensive exploratory discussions with Oxfam International and CARE USA regarding their current organizational change processes around their needs to strengthen accountability and effectiveness frameworks. Based on the interests of the NGOs involved, we hope these research opportunities will be realized in 2011-12.

Finally, we were part of a Moynihan taskforce to explore the potential of creating a joint Moynihan Institute-Executive Education platform to offer an evaluation, training and advisory services, based on a cost-recovery model. These services would be aligned with existing research interests and training experience, would reinforce feedback loops 'from theory to practice and

practice back to theory'. They would also provide additional independent income revenue for Moynihan interdisciplinary projects, which would lessen dependence on outside grant funding generation. This development of this initiative will continue in 2011-12, after key leaders in Maxwell as well as SU-wide have been consulted.

III. Plans for 2011-12

The main goals for 2010/11 are focused on fundraising, expanding the INGO Research Group, getting a book project underway, and expanding the research agenda on rights-based approaches (RBA).

Fundraising: If we receive the NSF award for the collaboration with Landivar University, we will follow-up with a full grant proposal due in January 2012. If we do not receive the initial funding for the collaboration, we will turn the current proposal around and submit it to other funding agencies. With the help of Maxwell's Grants Advisor, we have identified other potential sources for targeting in the next few months.

INGO research group: Following up on the initial meetings at ARNOVA and ISA, we put together a funding proposal to expand the INGO Research Group as a virtual community of researchers focused on the role of international NGOs in global affairs. We expect a decision in August or September 2011.

Book project: Over the summer and into the fall, we will continue to develop the book project which is based on forthcoming articles and other products based on the TNGO Interview Study. We hope to approach publishers at academic conferences in 2011-12.

RBA: Related to the fundraising entry above, we will continue to build our expertise in this area. Our evaluation of CCCD programming commissioned by Plan USA and due in late June 2011 will serve as an opportunity to approach other NGOs using similar methods as well as deepen our relations with Plan.

We would like to thank all of the team members of the TNGO Initiative for their contributions in 2010-11: Patrick Gaetjens, Uwe Gneiting, Christian Gonzales, Jesse Lecy, Ines Mergel, Sean Miskell, George Mitchell, Christiane Pagé, Paloma Raggo, Rachel Sigman, Haley Swedlund, Wendy Wicker, and Oana Zabava.

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Hans Peter Schmitz
Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken